(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
6 March 2003 (06.03.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 03/019399 A1

(51) International Patent Classification[7]: G06F 13/40, 13/42

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US02/27430

(22) International Filing Date: 27 August 2002 (27.08.2002)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/315,144 27 August 2001 (27.08.2001) US
Not furnished 5 August 2002 (05.08.2002) US

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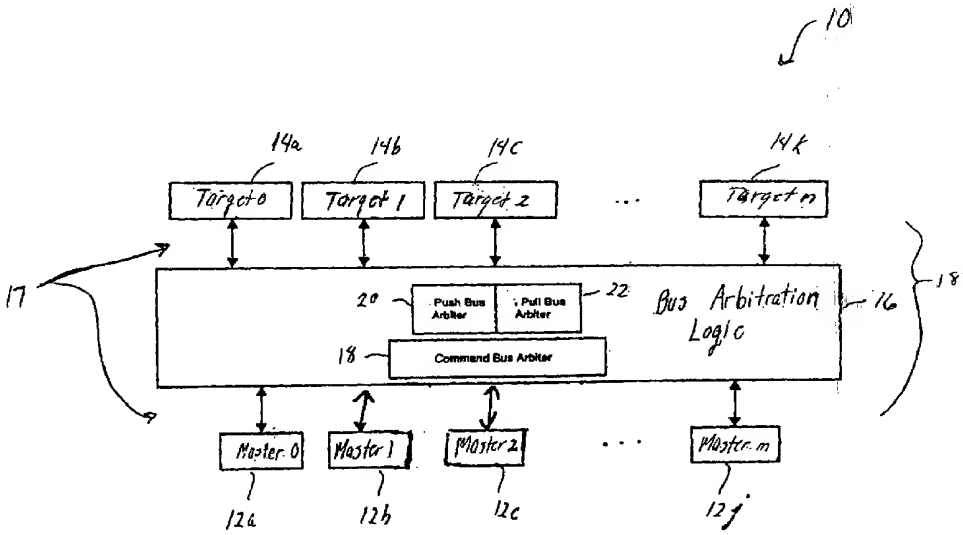
(81) Designated States *(national)*: AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States *(regional)*: ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: A MULTIPROCESSOR INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PROVIDING FLEXIBLE BANDWIDTH ALLOCATION VIA MULTIPLE INSTANTIATIONS OF SEPARATE DATA BUSES, CONTROL BUSES AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS



(57) Abstract: A bus mechanism to control information exchanges between bus masters and bus targets over a bus structure that includes separate command, push and pull data buses. Commands are generated by bus masters and are interpreted by bus targets on a per-target basis. Each bus target controls the servicing of a command intended for such target by controlling the transfer of push data over the push bus to a bus master specified in the command as a destination, for a push operation type, and by controlling the transfer of pull data over the pull bus to the target from a bus master specified in the command as a destination, for a pull operation type. Arbitration logic associated with each bus is used to control the flow of the information exchanges on that bus.

WO 03/019399 A1

Published:
— *with international search report*

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

A MULTIPROCESSOR INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PROVIDING FLEXIBLE BANDWIDTH ALLOCATION VIA MULTIPLE INSTANTIATIONS OF SEPARATE DATA BUSES, CONTROL BUSES AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/315,144 (Attorney Docket No. 10559-579P01), filed August 27, 2001.

BACKGROUND

Conventional bus schemes define a bus as an indivisible unit. Although commands and data may be transmitted over separate physical channels to improve concurrency, the bus protocols link the channels. The commands include a fixed number of predefined fields of command information, such as address, length (number of data bytes) and operation type (e.g., read, write, cacheline flush, and so forth).

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a processing system employing bus arbitration logic to support exchanges between bus masters and bus targets.

FIG. 2 is a detailed block diagram of the processing system (of FIG. 1) showing various buses, including command and push/pull buses, and associated arbiters of the bus

arbitration logic.

FIG. 3 is an illustration of an exemplary format of a command carried over the command bus.

FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram of an exemplary command bus data path of the processing system.

FIG. 5 is a schematic diagram of an exemplary push bus data path of the processing system.

FIG. 6 is a schematic diagram of an exemplary pull bus data path of the processing system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to FIG. 1, a system 10 having multiple first units 12, shown as masters 12a, 12b, 12c, …, 12j, and multiple second units 14, shown as targets 14a, 14b, 14c, …, 14k that use bus arbitration logic 16 to control exchanges of information over a bus system 17 is shown. Collectively, the bus system 17 and bus arbitration logic 16 form a bus structure 18. The components of the bus arbitration logic 16 include a command bus arbiter 19, a push bus arbiter 20 and a pull bus arbiter 22. These arbiters 19, 20, 22 are associated with the operation of the various buses in the bus system 17, as will be described with reference to FIGS. 2-6.

The masters 12 can include devices such as processors (e.g., general purpose microprocessors, embedded

microcontrollers) and external bus controllers. The targets 14 can include memory resources (e.g., interfaces to DRAM, SRAM), I/O resources (e.g., interfaces to media, media switch fabric), as well as other types of system resources. A master can also serve as a target. For example, a bus controller that allows the system to communicate with a host or other system via an external bus could perform the functions of both master and target.

For simplicity, only two of the masters, masters 0 and 1, and three of the targets, targets 0-2, are shown in FIGS. 2-6. One of the masters, master 0, is depicted as a device that can serve as both a master and a target.

Referring to FIG. 2, the system 10 includes three separate bus structures, a command bus 30 (indicated in dashed lines), a push bus 32 and a pull bus 34. The respective arbitration units 19, 20 and 24 are associated with and control the use of the command bus 30, the push bus 32 and the pull bus 34 respectively. The command bus 30 includes, on the master side of the arbitration logic, a first command bus 36, and on the target side of the arbiters, a second command bus 37. The master side command bus 36 includes a corresponding command bus for each master, for example, command buses 36a and 36b for master 12a and master 12b, respectively.

The push bus 32 includes a first push bus (target side) 38 and a second push bus (master side) 40. The pull bus includes a first pull bus (target side) 42 and a second pull bus 44 (master side). On the target side, the target push bus 38 and target pull bus 42 are used by the targets to transport commands and data between the targets and the push bus arbiter 20 and pull bus arbiter 22, respectively.

The masters 12a and 12b use the command bus arbiter 19 to arbitrate for use of the command bus 30 and, in particular, the target side command bus 37. The targets 14a, 14b, 14c each use the push bus arbiter 20 and the pull bus arbiter 22 to arbitrate for use of the master side push bus 40 and the pull bus 34, respectively. Control signals related to bus arbitration (not shown) will be discussed later with reference to FIGS. 4-6.

Referring to FIG. 3, an exemplary format of a command 50 carried over the command bus 30 is shown. The command 50 is partitioned into multiple fields 52a, 52b, 52c, ... 52p that carry encoded information. The fields 52 can be of differing widths. The fields 52 include a target ID field 52a and an operation (or command) type field 52b. Each target 14 has a unique, hardwired identification number ("ID"). The target ID field 52a indicates, by ID, which of the targets should accept the command. The masters 12 send

a command in the format of the command 50 to all of the targets 14, which decode the target ID in parallel to determine if the command 50 is meant for them. A set of codes corresponding to target IDs for an exemplary set of targets is shown in TABLE 1:

Code	Target
00 0000	None (no command on the command bus)
00 0001	Media Interface
00 0010	SRAM Interface
00 0011	DRAM Interface
00 1001	Bus Controller
00 0100	Hash Unit

TABLE 1

The operation type field 52b specifies an operation type. Each target interprets the operation type specified by the code in the operation type field 52b to determine the operation to be performed. The value in the operation type field 52b determines how values in other fields are to be interpreted by each target. The operation type can include as many different encodings of information as operation types that most (if not all) target units support, for example, read and write. One or more of the fields 52c - 52p can be used as operation type extensions, based on the value in operation type field, as well. An exemplary

encoding for some commands types supported by the targets shown in TABLE 1 above are shown in TABLE 2:

Code	DRAM I/F	SRAM I/F	Hash Unit	Media I/F	Bus Controller
0000	Read	Read	Hash	Read	Read
0001	Write	Write	Reserved	Write	Write
0010	Receive_Buffer Read	Swap	Reserved	Reserved	Reserved
0011	Transmit_Buffer Write	Set bits	Reserved	Reserved	Reserved
0100	Control Status Registers (CSR) Read	Clear bits	Reserved	Reserved	Reserved
0101	CSR Write	Add	Reserved	Reserved	Reserved

TABLE 2

The remaining fields 52c through 52p (corresponding to fields Field_1, Field_2, …, Field_N) hold other parameters used by the targets 14, such as address and burst count. For example, and as shown in the command format of FIG. 3, Field 3 is used to specify a push/pull ID 53, which identifies a source or destination 54, among other types of information. The push/pull ID 53 is passed to the target 14 via the command bus 30, and provided by the target to the push bus arbiter or the pull bus arbiter when the command is serviced. The push bus arbiter or the pull bus arbiter arbiter, as appropriate in turn, provides the push/pull ID to the appropriate source (in the case of a pull operation) or destination (in the case of a push operation) as an

address. The definition of fields within the push/pull ID field may be dependent on the specified source or destination. In addition, one or more of the Fields 1 through N may be used differently based on operation type. For example, a field can indicate byte masks for a write operation type and priority level for a read operation type.

According to the bus protocol of system 10, each target that receives a command in the form of the command 50 interprets the fields 52 on a per-target basis. This enables the targets to supply a rich set of functions, such as read-modify-write with programmable modify, data transform (e.g., perform a hash on operands and return result) and fast write (use some fields of the command to specify data and others to specify address, eliminating the latency and resource use of data bus).

The masters 12 issue commands to the targets 14 based on instruction execution, or some other appropriate mechanism. For example, if the master is a bus controller, it may issue commands as a result of a DMA operation or when it is being accessed by another device on the bus that it controls.

Referring to FIG. 4, a command bus data path 60 is shown. The command arbiter 19 includes an arbitration unit 62 that receives a command queue full signal 64 as input

from each of the targets 14. The command queue full signal 64 indicates when a threshold fullness of a command queue 66 in each target has been reached. The arbitration unit 62 receives command requests over command request input lines 68 from the masters 12, and provides on grant output lines 70 to the masters 12 grants to the command bus requests by the masters 12.

Each bus master 12 that wishes to drive a command on the command bus 30 first sends a request to the arbitration unit 60 on a respective one of the input lines 68. This request indicates the ID of the target with which the master wishes to communicate. As mentioned earlier, the arbitration unit 62 also receives signals from each target 14 indicating whether that target's command queue 66 is full or not. The arbitration unit 62 uses the command queue full information to inhibit grants to the command requesters if the command queue of the target they need is full, while permitting requesters to other targets to obtain grants. The arbitration policy of the arbitration unit 62 may be, for example, a round robin policy, and may employ a programmable priority for certain masters. The arbitration scheme of the arbitration unit 62 opportunistically grants access to another bus master when one of two conditions occur: a master is scheduled to be granted access but does

not have a request pending; or a master is scheduled to be granted access but the requested target's command queue is full.

When the arbitration unit 62 has granted a bus request of a master, that master transmits a command on a corresponding one of the master command buses 36, to the command bus arbiter 19. The command bus arbiter 19 also includes a multiplexor (MUX) 72 that receives a command from a master and is enabled by the arbitration unit 62 to control the transmission of the command over the command bus 37 to the targets.

FIG. 5 shows details of a push bus datapath 80. The push bus arbiter 20 includes multiple push command queues 82a, 82b, 82c, 82d, one for each supported target, coupled to a multiplexor (MUX) 84 and a push bus arbitration unit 86. The push command queues 82a, 82b, 82c, 82d are coupled to corresponding targets 14a, 14b, 14c and target "master 12a" (for operations in which master 0 functions as a target), respectively, by sets of push data buses 88 and push command buses 90, one set for each target in the system, that is, buses 88a and 90a for target 14a, buses 88b and 90b for target 14, buses 88c and 90c for target 14c and buses 88d and 90d for master 12a (as a target). The target side bus 38 also includes a push command queue full signal

(Push_CmdQ_Full) 91 to indicate to a target that its corresponding push command queue has reached a predetermined fullness level. The master side push bus 40 (from FIG. 2) includes a push ID bus 92 and a push data bus 94.

A target, having received and decoded a command that was intended for it, sends requested data to a corresponding one of the queues 82 on the corresponding push data bus 88. Thus, the push command queues store a combination of push data and push commands. The push commands include push IDs, which are provided to the arbitration units 86.

Data stored in entries of the push command queues 82 are provided to the MUX 84. The arbitration unit 86 selects one of the push command queues 82. The arbitration unit 86 thus provides a select signal 96 to the MUX 84 to enable MUX 84 to provide as output (for transmission onto the push data bus 94) data from the selected push command queue and transmits the push ID from the selected push command queue onto the push ID bus 92.

Referring to FIG. 6, a pull bus data path 100 is shown. On the target side of the pull bus arbiter 22, the targets 14 are coupled to the pull bus arbiter 22 by the pull bus 42 (from FIG. 2). The masters 12 are coupled to the pull bus arbiter 22 by the master side pull bus 44 (from FIG. 2). The targets 14 are end points and the masters 12 are sources

for a pull operation.

The pull bus arbiter 22 includes a multiplexor (MUX) 102, an arbitration unit 104 and pull command queues 106a, 106b, 106c, 106d, one for each supported target, coupled to the pull bus arbitration unit 104. The pull command queues 106a, 106b, 106c, 106d are coupled to corresponding targets 14a, 14b, 14c and target "master 12a" (for operations in which master 0 functions as a target), respectively, by pull data buses 108a, 108b, 108c and 108d, respectively, and pull command buses 110a, 110b, 110c and 110d, respectively. Collectively, the buses 108, 110 make up the target side pull bus 42. The arbiter 22 also provides a pull command queue full signal (Pull_CmdQ_Full) 111 to a target to indicate to the target that the corresponding pull command queue 106 is almost full, and a signal Take_Data 112 to indicate to a target that pull data has been transferred to that target.

The master side pull bus 44 includes a pull data bus 112a for master 12a and a pull data bus 113b for master 12b. The pull data bus 113 is used by the masters to send pull data to the arbiter 22, or more specifically, to the multiplexor 102. The pull bus 44 also includes a pull ID bus 114 and pull done signal (Pull_Sig_Done) 116 that allow the arbiter 22 to provide information to the masters during

a pull (or write) operation.

Each of the targets uses a data buffer (not shown) to store pull (or write) data. The target receives the command 50 over the command bus 37 (shown in FIGS. 2 and 4) and determines from the command's operation type field 52b (FIG. 3) that the operation is a pull operation. When the target has room in the data buffer for the amount of data specified in the command, it arbitrates for the use of the pull data bus 34. The information specifying the location of the data (that is, which master and which storage location being used by the master for the data) was presented in the pull ID field 53 of the command 50. Because that information is in a command field, the unit identified as the source of the pull data does not need to be the master that sent the command. The source can be any addressable unit that has a path to the pull data bus 108.

Each target sends the full Pull ID and length (derived from the command 50) for information it would like to pull to the target. The target must have buffer space available for the pull data when it asserts the Pull ID via the corresponding pull command bus 110.

The Pull ID is enqueued in a corresponding one of the pull command queues 106 in the pull bus arbiter 22 unless the Pull_CmdQ_Full signal 111 is asserted for that pull

command queue. The assertion of the Pull_CmdQ_Full signal 111 indicates that the pull command queue 106 for that specific target has reached a predetermined fullness threshold.

The arbitration unit 104 arbitrates among the currently valid pull IDs enqueued in the pull command queues 106 to select a target, or more specifically, a pull ID enqueued by that target. The arbitration policy can be one of a number of well known schemes, for example, round robin, or a priority based scheme. The arbitration unit 104 sends the selected pull ID to the corresponding source over the pull ID bus 114. The pull bus arbiter 22 asserts the Take_Data signal 112 to the selected target. The source provides the pull data to the MUX 102, which is enabled to send the pull data onto the pull data bus 108 by the arbitration unit 104 via control signal 119. The arbitration unit 104 asserts the pull done signal 116 to the source.

Thus, write data transport is under the control of the target. The target of a write operation pulls the write or pull data over the pull bus 34 when it needs it, rather than having it sent at the same time as the write operation type. Therefore the target can allocate internal buffers for the pull data based on when the target needs the data and has available buffer space. Also, as mentioned earlier, the

target can get write data from a source other than the command initiator, as directed by information in the command.

The architecture of system 10 provides for flexible bandwidth allocation via multiple instantiations of the various buses and arbiters. Because there are separate buses for commands, push data, and pull data, the buses can be added incrementally as needed.

Referring back to FIG. 4, if the control bandwidth for an application is insufficient, one or more additional copies of the command bus 37 and arbiter 19 could be added to the system. Each arbiter 19 could support a subset of the masters (for example, in a four-master implementation in which two arbiters are used, each arbiter could support a different pair of the masters), but the targets would receive commands from all of the masters.

For increased data bus bandwidth, copies of the push bus and pull bus, along with the appropriate arbitration logic, could be added. For example, referring back to FIG. 5, additional master-side buses 40 and arbiters 20 could be added to the system. Each target's push data bus 88 and command bus 90 would be coupled to each of the arbiters so there would be no need for a target to drive more than one set of push data/command buses. Each arbiter would have to

be aware of the masters (destinations) to which it is wired, and enqueue the data and IDs accordingly. Each arbiter 20 and associated bus 40 could be connected to a subset of the sources.

Referring to FIG. 6, copies of the target side pull bus 42 and associated arbitration logic could be added to the system. Each arbiter 22 and bus 42 would be connected to each of the targets. Each arbiter 22 and associated bus 44 could support a subset of the sources. The pull bus arrangement would be similar to the push bus arrangement in that each target only needs to drive one copy of the pull ID to all of the arbiters. However, unique copies of the pull data are needed, as it is possible that the pull buses would have valid data on them on the same cycle. In the case of both push and pull buses, all of the arbiters would be connected to all targets, allowing data to be moved between any master and any target.

Other embodiments are within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

transferring a command and a target identification between one or more bus masters and bus targets over a bus structure, the command including information that is interpreted differently by one of the bus targets based on the target identification.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the target identification is a field in the command.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the bus structure includes a separate command bus, push bus and pull bus.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein transferring includes sending the command to all of the bus targets over the command bus so that each bus target can determine if the command is intended for such target.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the bus target identified in the command controls the transfer of information over the push bus to one of the bus masters for

a push operation.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the one of the bus masters is identified in the command by an identifier in a destination field in the command.

7. The method of claim 3 wherein the bus target identified in the command is operable to control transfer of information over the pull bus from one of the master buses to the bus target for a pull operation.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the one of the bus masters is identified in the command by an identifier in a source field in the command.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the command is formatted to specify one of a plurality of operation types, and the command includes at least one field that is interpreted according to the which of the plurality of operation types is specified in the command.

10. The method of claim 2 wherein at least one of the units acts as one of the bus masters at times and acts as one of the bus targets at other times.

11. The method of claim 3 wherein the bus structure further includes arbiters, the arbiters including a command arbiter associated with the command bus, a push arbiter associated with the push bus and a pull arbiter associated with the pull bus

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the bus masters arbitrate for use of the command using the command arbiter, and the bus targets arbitrate for use of the push and pull buses using the respective push and pull arbiters.

13. An article comprising:

a storage medium having stored thereon instructions that when executed by a machine result in the following:

transferring a command over a bus to bus targets, the command being formatted to identify one of the bus targets and include information that is interpreted differently based on which one of the bus targets is identified.

14. The article of claim 13 wherein the bus structure includes a separate command bus, push bus and pull bus.

15. An apparatus comprising:

a plurality of units;

a bus structure to enable communication exchanges between the units connected to the bus structure, with one or more of the units being bus masters and others of the units being bus targets, the bus masters operable to send a command to bus targets over the bus structure, the command formatted to identify one of the bus targets and having information that is interpreted differently based on which one of the bus targets is identified.

16. The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the bus structure includes a separate command bus, push bus and pull bus.

17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the command is sent to all of the bus targets over the command bus to all of the bus targets and each bus target determines if the command is intended for such target.

18. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the bus target identified in the command is operable to control transfer of information over the push bus to one of the bus masters for a push operation.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the one of the bus masters is identified in the command by an identifier in a destination field in the command.

20. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the bus target identified in the command is operable to control transfer of information over the pull bus from one of the bus masters to the bus target for a pull operation.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the one of the bus masters is identified in the command by an identifier in a source field in the command.

22. The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the command is formatted to specify one of a plurality of operation types, and the command includes at least one field that is interpreted according to the which of the plurality of operation types is specified in the command.

23. A apparatus comprising:

a bus master operable to send a command to bus targets over a bus structure, the command being formatted to identify one of the bus targets and including information

that is interpreted differently based on which one of the bus targets is identified.

24. The apparatus of claim 23 wherein the command is formatted to specify one of a plurality of operation types, and the command includes at least one field that is interpreted according to the which of the plurality of operation types is specified in the command.

25. An apparatus comprising:

a bus target operable to receive a command from a bus master over a bus structure, the command being formatted to identify the bus target that receives the command; and

logic in the bus target to interpret information that is received by the bus target identified.

26. The apparatus of claim 25 wherein logic processes the command that is formatted to specify one of a plurality of operation types, and the command includes at least one field interpreted according to the which of the plurality of operation types is specified in the command.

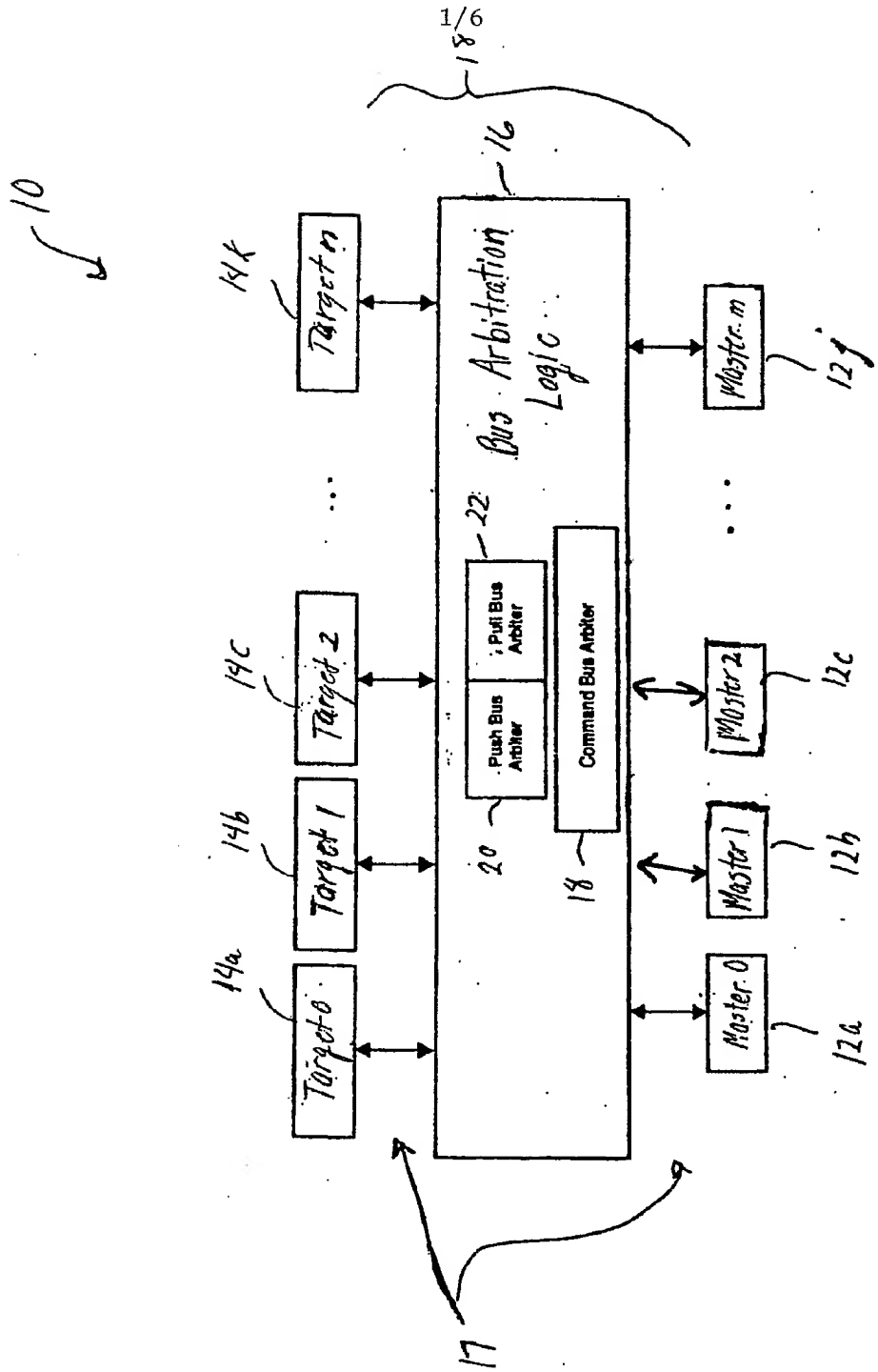

10
18
16
Bus Arbitration Logic
14k
Target n
14c
Target 2
14b
Target 1
14a
Target 0
22
Data Bus Arbiter
Push Bus Arbiter
20
Command Bus Arbiter
18
12n
Master n
12c
Master 2
12b
Master 1
12a
Master 0
17

FIG. 1

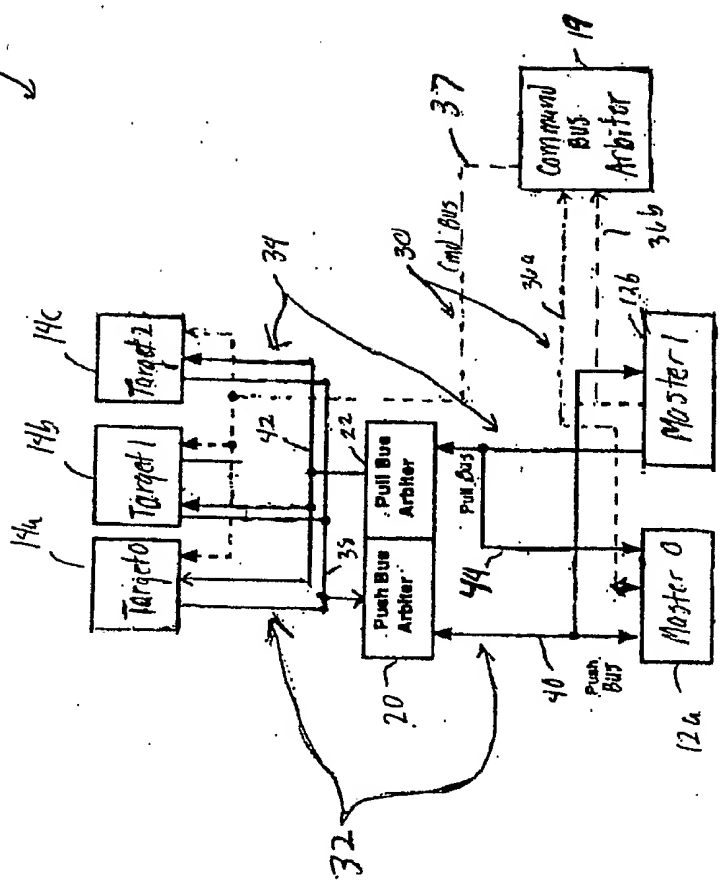

10
19
Command Bus Arbiter
37
Cmd_Bus
30
30a
30b
34
14c
Target 2
14b
Target 1
14a
Target 0
42
22
35
Pull Bus Arbiter
Push Bus Arbiter
Pull_Bus
44
Master 1
126
Master 0
124
40
Push Bus
20
32

FIG. 2

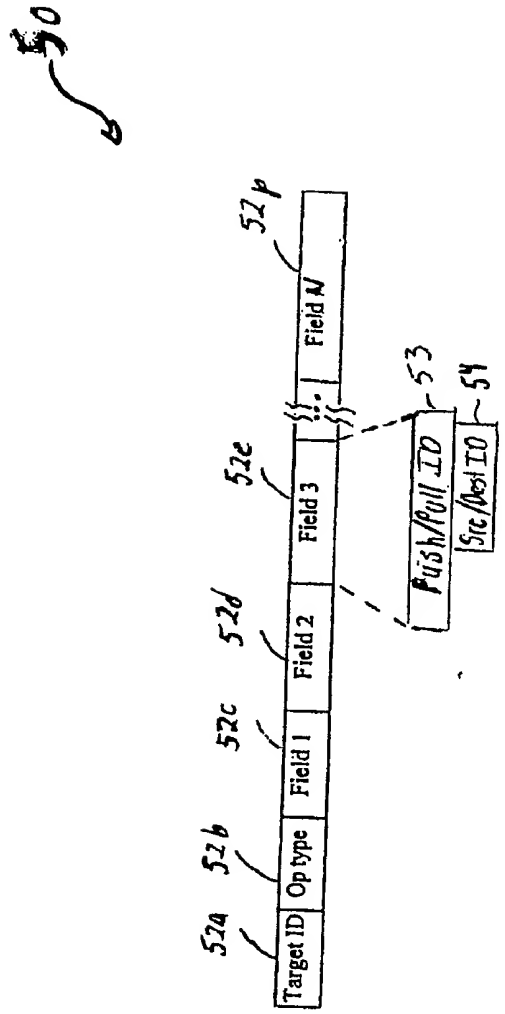

50
52a
Target ID
52b
Op type
52c
Field 1
52d
Field 2
52e
Field 3
52p
Field N
53
Push/Pull ID
54
Src/Dest ID

FIG. 3

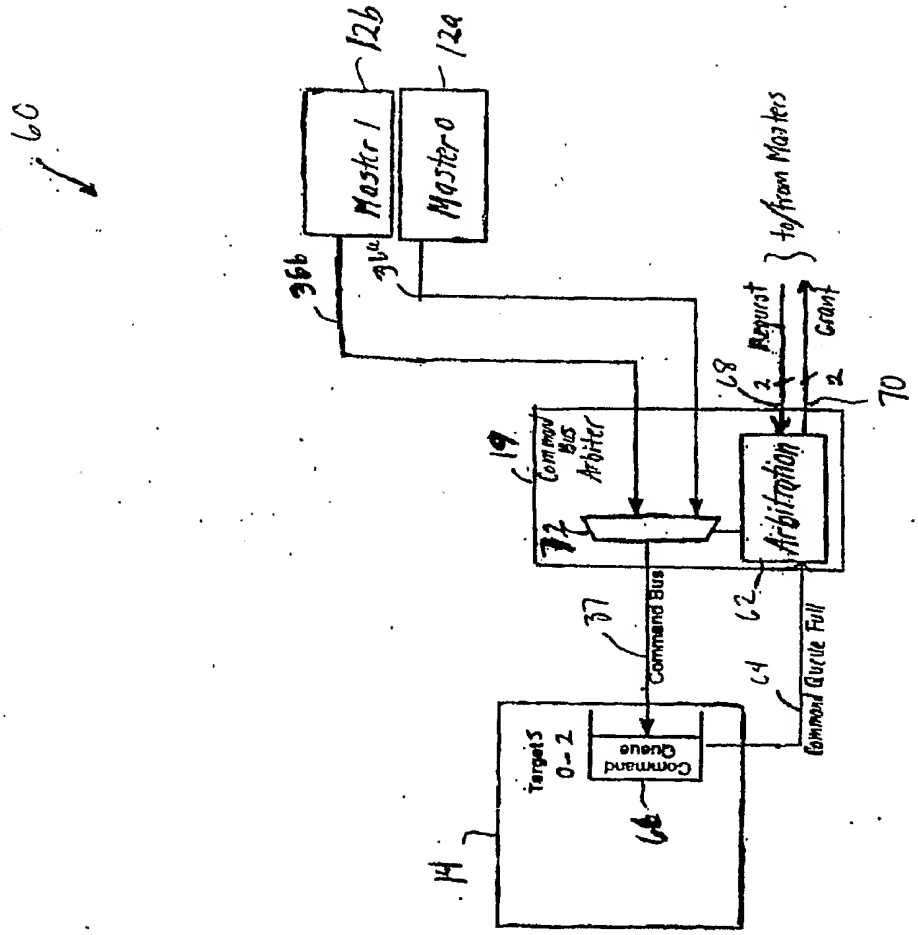

60
Master 1
Master 0
126
124
36b
36a
to/from Masters
Request
Grant
2
2
68
70
19
Command Bus Arbiter
72
Arbitration
37
Command Bus
62
64
Command Queue Full
Target S 0-2
Command Queue
66
14

FIG. 4

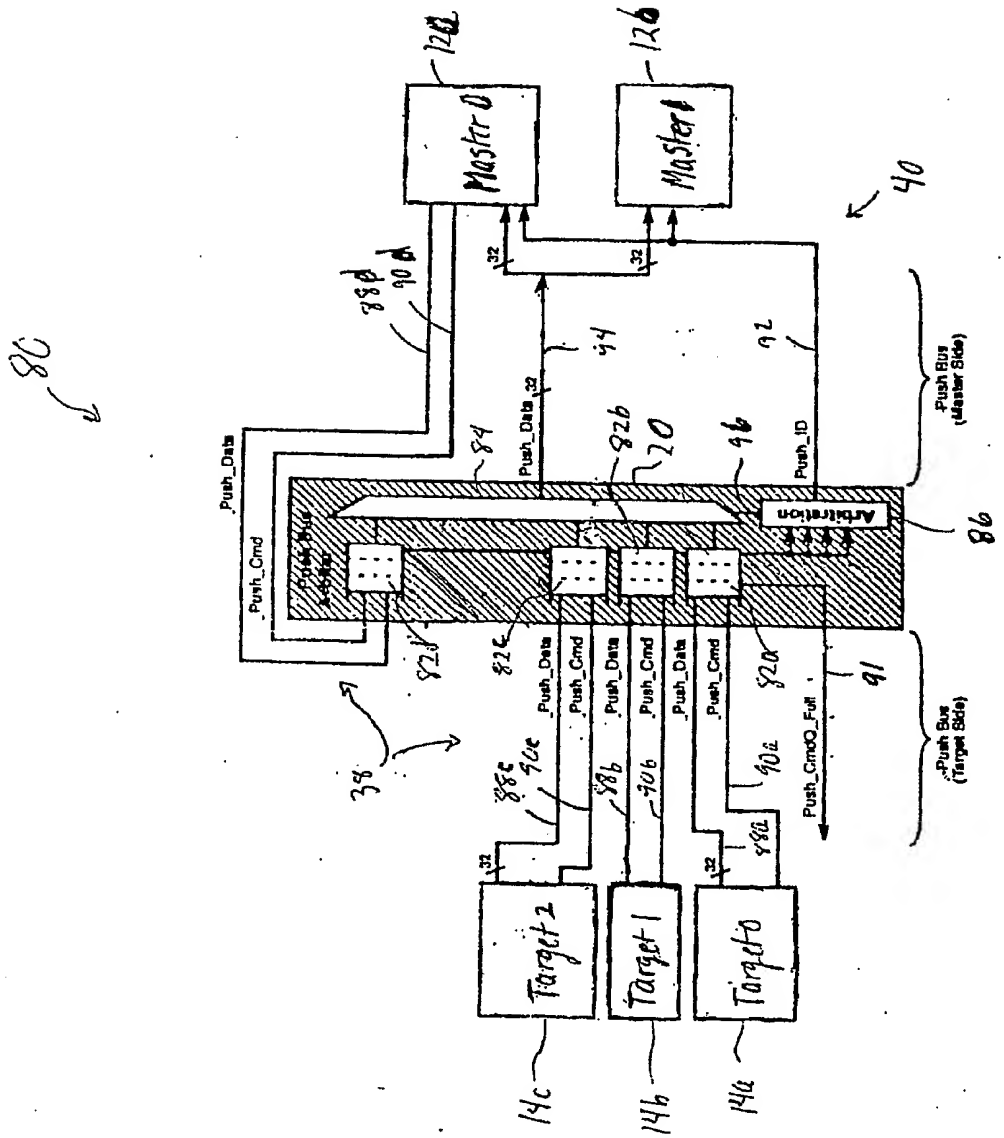

Master 0
Master 1
Target 2
Target 1
Target 0
Push_Data
Push_Cmd
Push_ID
Push_Data_32
Push_CmdQ_Full
Arbitration
Push Bus (Master Side)
Push Bus (Target Side)
80
40
86
91
92
94
96
36

FIG. 5

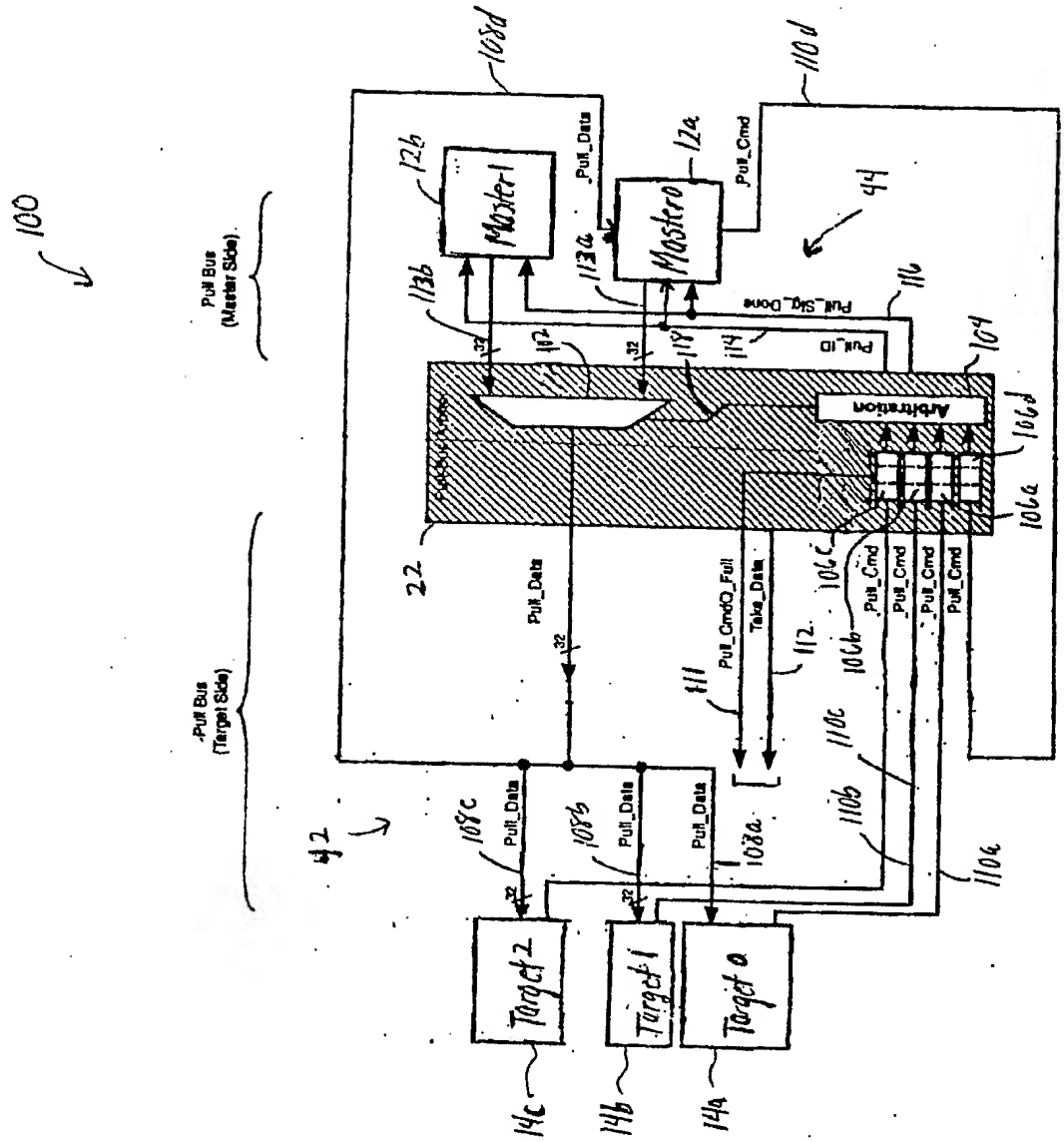

100
Pull Bus (Master Side)
Pull Bus (Target Side)
42
44
22
Master1
Mastro
Target2
Target1
Target 0
Arbitration
Pull_Data
Pull_Cmd
Take_Data
Pull_CmdO_Full
Pull_ID
Pull_Sig_Done
32

FIG. 6

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/US 02/27430

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 G06F13/40 G06F13/42

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 G06F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)
EPO-Internal, COMPENDEX, INSPEC, PAJ, IBM-TDB, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	ROMILLY BOWDEN: "What is HART?" ROMILLY'S HART AND FIELDBUS WEB SITE, 'Online! 1997, XP002219605 Retrieved from the Internet: <URL:http://www.romilly.co.uk/whathart.htm > 'retrieved on 2002-11-05! page 2 -page 3 ---	1,2,4,9, 10,13, 15,22-26
X	ANONYMOUS: "HART, Field Communications Protocol, Application Guide" 'Online! 1999 , HART COMMUNICATION FOUNDATION , 9390 RESEARCH BOULEVARD, SUITE I-350, ASUTIN, TEXAS 78759 USA XP002219606 Retrieved from the Internet: <URL: http://lhc-div.web.cern.ch/lhc-div/IAS/WS/ WorldFip/Labo/appguide.pdf> 'retrieved on 2002-11-05! page 6 -page 7 ---	1,2,4,9, 10,13, 15,22-26

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[X] Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

[X] Patent family members are listed in annex.

° Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
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Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
6 November 2002	21/11/2002

Name and mailing address of the ISA	Authorized officer
European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Albert, J

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1992)

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/US 02/27430

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 4 045 782 A (SCHUMANN REINHARD ET AL) 30 August 1977 (1977-08-30) column 3, line 55 - line 62; figure 1	3,16
A	US 5 812 799 A (ZURAVLEFF WILLIAM K ET AL) 22 September 1998 (1998-09-22) abstract; figures 4,8	1-26

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

rmation on patent family members

In onal Application No
PCT/US 02/27430

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 4045782 A	30-08-1977	NONE	
US 5812799 A	22-09-1998	NONE	

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

CORRECTED VERSION

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
6 March 2003 (06.03.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 03/019399 A1

(51) International Patent Classification[7]: G06F 13/40, 13/42

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US02/27430

(22) International Filing Date: 27 August 2002 (27.08.2002)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/315,144 27 August 2001 (27.08.2001) US
10/212,944 5 August 2002 (05.08.2002) US

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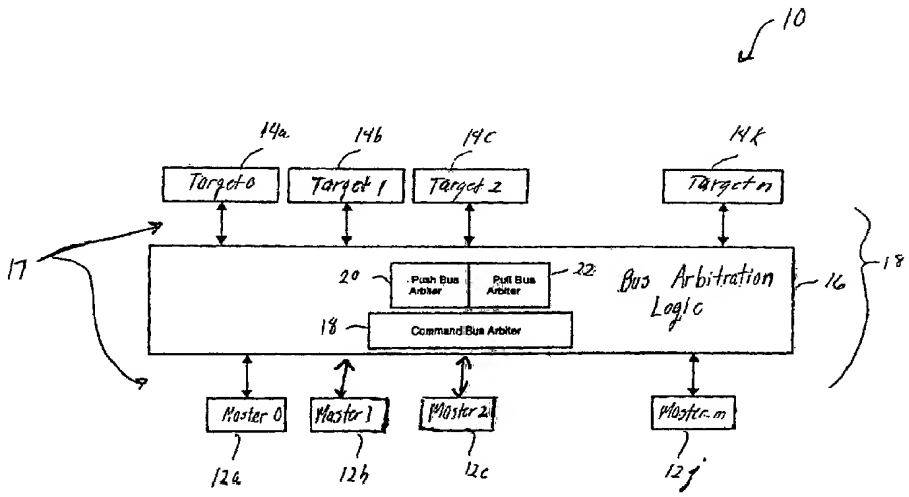
(81) Designated States *(national)*: AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States *(regional)*: ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: A MULTIPROCESSOR INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PROVIDING FLEXIBLE BANDWIDTH ALLOCATION VIA MULTIPLE INSTANTIATIONS OF SEPARATE DATA BUSES, CONTROL BUSES AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS



(57) Abstract: A bus mechanism to control information exchanges between bus masters and bus targets over a bus structure that includes separate command, push and pull data buses. Commands are generated by bus masters and are interpreted by bus targets on a per-target basis. Each bus target controls the servicing of a command intended for such target by controlling the transfer of push data over the push bus to a bus master specified in the command as a destination, for a push operation type, and by controlling the transfer of pull data over the pull bus to the target from a bus master specified in the command as a destination, for a pull operation type. Arbitration logic associated with each bus is used to control the flow of the information exchanges on that bus.

WO 03/019399 A1

Published:
— *with international search report*

(48) Date of publication of this corrected version:
2 October 2003

(15) Information about Correction:
see PCT Gazette No. 40/2003 of 2 October 2003, Section II

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

CORRECTED VERSION

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
6 March 2003 (06.03.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2003/019399 A1

(51) International Patent Classification[7]: G06F 13/40, 13/42

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US2002/027430

(22) International Filing Date: 27 August 2002 (27.08.2002)

(25) Filing Language: English

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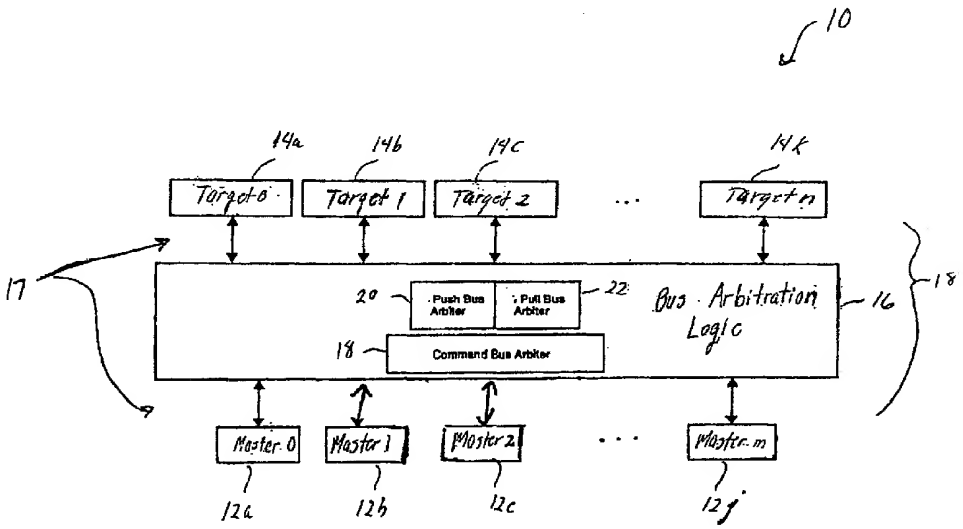
(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:
— with international search report

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: A MULTIPROCESSOR INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PROVIDING FLEXIBLE BANDWIDTH ALLOCATION VIA MULTIPLE INSTANTIATIONS OF SEPARATE DATA BUSES, CONTROL BUSES AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS



(57) Abstract: A bus mechanism to control information exchanges between bus masters and bus targets over a bus structure that includes separate command, push and pull data buses. Commands are generated by bus masters and are interpreted by bus targets on a per-target basis. Each bus target controls the servicing of a command intended for such target by controlling the transfer of push data over the push bus to a bus master specified in the command as a destination, for a push operation type, and by controlling the transfer of pull data over the pull bus to the target from a bus master specified in the command as a destination, for a pull operation type. Arbitration logic associated with each bus is used to control the flow of the information exchanges on that bus.

WO 2003/019399 A1

(48) Date of publication of this corrected version:
29 January 2004

(15) Information about Corrections:
see PCT Gazette No. 05/2004 of 29 January 2004, Section II

Previous Correction:
see PCT Gazette No. 40/2003 of 2 October 2003, Section II

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

A MULTIPROCESSOR INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PROVIDING FLEXIBLE BANDWIDTH ALLOCATION VIA MULTIPLE INSTANTIATIONS OF SEPARATE DATA BUSES, CONTROL BUSES AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/315,144 (Attorney Docket No. 10559-579P01), filed August 27, 2001.

BACKGROUND

Conventional bus schemes define a bus as an indivisible unit. Although commands and data may be transmitted over separate physical channels to improve concurrency, the bus protocols link the channels. The commands include a fixed number of predefined fields of command information, such as address, length (number of data bytes) and operation type (e.g., read, write, cacheline flush, and so forth).

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a processing system employing bus arbitration logic to support exchanges between bus masters and bus targets.

FIG. 2 is a detailed block diagram of the processing system (of FIG. 1) showing various buses, including command and push/pull buses, and associated arbiters of the bus

arbitration logic.

FIG. 3 is an illustration of an exemplary format of a command carried over the command bus.

FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram of an exemplary command bus data path of the processing system.

FIG. 5 is a schematic diagram of an exemplary push bus data path of the processing system.

FIG. 6 is a schematic diagram of an exemplary pull bus data path of the processing system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to FIG. 1, a system 10 having multiple first units 12, shown as masters 12a, 12b, 12c, ..., 12j, and multiple second units 14, shown as targets 14a, 14b, 14c, ..., 14k that use bus arbitration logic 16 to control exchanges of information over a bus system 17 is shown. Collectively, the bus system 17 and bus arbitration logic 16 form a bus structure 18. The components of the bus arbitration logic 16 include a command bus arbiter 19, a push bus arbiter 20 and a pull bus arbiter 22. These arbiters 19, 20, 22 are associated with the operation of the various buses in the bus system 17, as will be described with reference to FIGS. 2-6.

The masters 12 can include devices such as processors (e.g., general purpose microprocessors, embedded

microcontrollers) and external bus controllers. The targets 14 can include memory resources (e.g., interfaces to DRAM, SRAM), I/O resources (e.g., interfaces to media, media switch fabric), as well as other types of system resources. A master can also serve as a target. For example, a bus controller that allows the system to communicate with a host or other system via an external bus could perform the functions of both master and target.

For simplicity, only two of the masters, masters 0 and 1, and three of the targets, targets 0-2, are shown in FIGS. 2-6. One of the masters, master 0, is depicted as a device that can serve as both a master and a target.

Referring to FIG. 2, the system 10 includes three separate bus structures, a command bus 30 (indicated in dashed lines), a push bus 32 and a pull bus 34. The respective arbitration units 19, 20 and 24 are associated with and control the use of the command bus 30, the push bus 32 and the pull bus 34 respectively. The command bus 30 includes, on the master side of the arbitration logic, a first command bus 36, and on the target side of the arbiters, a second command bus 37. The master side command bus 36 includes a corresponding command bus for each master, for example, command buses 36a and 36b for master 12a and master 12b, respectively.

The push bus 32 includes a first push bus (target side) 38 and a second push bus (master side) 40. The pull bus includes a first pull bus (target side) 42 and a second pull bus 44 (master side). On the target side, the target push bus 38 and target pull bus 42 are used by the targets to transport commands and data between the targets and the push bus arbiter 20 and pull bus arbiter 22, respectively.

The masters 12a and 12b use the command bus arbiter 19 to arbitrate for use of the command bus 30 and, in particular, the target side command bus 37. The targets 14a, 14b, 14c each use the push bus arbiter 20 and the pull bus arbiter 22 to arbitrate for use of the master side push bus 40 and the pull bus 34, respectively. Control signals related to bus arbitration (not shown) will be discussed later with reference to FIGS. 4-6.

Referring to FIG. 3, an exemplary format of a command 50 carried over the command bus 30 is shown. The command 50 is partitioned into multiple fields 52a, 52b, 52c, … 52p that carry encoded information. The fields 52 can be of differing widths. The fields 52 include a target ID field 52a and an operation (or command) type field 52b. Each target 14 has a unique, hardwired identification number ("ID"). The target ID field 52a indicates, by ID, which of the targets should accept the command. The masters 12 send

a command in the format of the command 50 to all of the targets 14, which decode the target ID in parallel to determine if the command 50 is meant for them. A set of codes corresponding to target IDs for an exemplary set of targets is shown in TABLE 1:

Code	Target
00 0000	None (no command on the command bus)
00 0001	Media Interface
00 0010	SRAM Interface
00 0011	DRAM Interface
00 1001	Bus Controller
00 0100	Hash Unit

TABLE 1

The operation type field 52b specifies an operation type. Each target interprets the operation type specified by the code in the operation type field 52b to determine the operation to be performed. The value in the operation type field 52b determines how values in other fields are to be interpreted by each target. The operation type can include as many different encodings of information as operation types that most (if not all) target units support, for example, read and write. One or more of the fields 52c - 52p can be used as operation type extensions, based on the value in operation type field, as well. An exemplary

encoding for some commands types supported by the targets shown in TABLE 1 above are shown in TABLE 2:

Code	DRAM I/F	SRAM I/F	Hash Unit	Media I/F	Bus Controller
0000	Read	Read	Hash	Read	Read
0001	Write	Write	Reserved	Write	Write
0010	Receive_Buffer Read	Swap	Reserved	Reserved	Reserved
0011	Transmit_Buffer Write	Set bits	Reserved	Reserved	Reserved
0100	Control Status Registers (CSR) Read	Clear bits	Reserved	Reserved	Reserved
0101	CSR Write	Add	Reserved	Reserved	Reserved

TABLE 2

The remaining fields 52c through 52p (corresponding to fields Field_1, Field_2, …, Field_N) hold other parameters used by the targets 14, such as address and burst count. For example, and as shown in the command format of FIG. 3, Field 3 is used to specify a push/pull ID 53, which identifies a source or destination 54, among other types of information. The push/pull ID 53 is passed to the target 14 via the command bus 30, and provided by the target to the push bus arbiter or the pull bus arbiter when the command is serviced. The push bus arbiter or the pull bus arbiter arbiter, as appropriate in turn, provides the push/pull ID to the appropriate source (in the case of a pull operation) or destination (in the case of a push operation) as an

address. The definition of fields within the push/pull ID field may be dependent on the specified source or destination. In addition, one or more of the Fields 1 through N may be used differently based on operation type. For example, a field can indicate byte masks for a write operation type and priority level for a read operation type.

According to the bus protocol of system 10, each target that receives a command in the form of the command 50 interprets the fields 52 on a per-target basis. This enables the targets to supply a rich set of functions, such as read-modify-write with programmable modify, data transform (e.g., perform a hash on operands and return result) and fast write (use some fields of the command to specify data and others to specify address, eliminating the latency and resource use of data bus).

The masters 12 issue commands to the targets 14 based on instruction execution, or some other appropriate mechanism. For example, if the master is a bus controller, it may issue commands as a result of a DMA operation or when it is being accessed by another device on the bus that it controls.

Referring to FIG. 4, a command bus data path 60 is shown. The command arbiter 19 includes an arbitration unit 62 that receives a command queue full signal 64 as input

from each of the targets 14. The command queue full signal 64 indicates when a threshold fullness of a command queue 66 in each target has been reached. The arbitration unit 62 receives command requests over command request input lines 68 from the masters 12, and provides on grant output lines 70 to the masters 12 grants to the command bus requests by the masters 12.

Each bus master 12 that wishes to drive a command on the command bus 30 first sends a request to the arbitration unit 60 on a respective one of the input lines 68. This request indicates the ID of the target with which the master wishes to communicate. As mentioned earlier, the arbitration unit 62 also receives signals from each target 14 indicating whether that target's command queue 66 is full or not. The arbitration unit 62 uses the command queue full information to inhibit grants to the command requesters if the command queue of the target they need is full, while permitting requesters to other targets to obtain grants. The arbitration policy of the arbitration unit 62 may be, for example, a round robin policy, and may employ a programmable priority for certain masters. The arbitration scheme of the arbitration unit 62 opportunistically grants access to another bus master when one of two conditions occur: a master is scheduled to be granted access but does

not have a request pending; or a master is scheduled to be granted access but the requested target's command queue is full.

When the arbitration unit 62 has granted a bus request of a master, that master transmits a command on a corresponding one of the master command buses 36, to the command bus arbiter 19. The command bus arbiter 19 also includes a multiplexor (MUX) 72 that receives a command from a master and is enabled by the arbitration unit 62 to control the transmission of the command over the command bus 37 to the targets.

FIG. 5 shows details of a push bus datapath 80. The push bus arbiter 20 includes multiple push command queues 82a, 82b, 82c, 82d, one for each supported target, coupled to a multiplexor (MUX) 84 and a push bus arbitration unit 86. The push command queues 82a, 82b, 82c, 82d are coupled to corresponding targets 14a, 14b, 14c and target "master 12a" (for operations in which master 0 functions as a target), respectively, by sets of push data buses 88 and push command buses 90, one set for each target in the system, that is, buses 88a and 90a for target 14a, buses 88b and 90b for target 14, buses 88c and 90c for target 14c and buses 88d and 90d for master 12a (as a target). The target side bus 38 also includes a push command queue full signal

(Push_CmdQ_Full) 91 to indicate to a target that its corresponding push command queue has reached a predetermined fullness level. The master side push bus 40 (from FIG. 2) includes a push ID bus 92 and a push data bus 94.

A target, having received and decoded a command that was intended for it, sends requested data to a corresponding one of the queues 82 on the corresponding push data bus 88. Thus, the push command queues store a combination of push data and push commands. The push commands include push IDs, which are provided to the arbitration units 86.

Data stored in entries of the push command queues 82 are provided to the MUX 84. The arbitration unit 86 selects one of the push command queues 82. The arbitration unit 86 thus provides a select signal 96 to the MUX 84 to enable MUX 84 to provide as output (for transmission onto the push data bus 94) data from the selected push command queue and transmits the push ID from the selected push command queue onto the push ID bus 92.

Referring to FIG. 6, a pull bus data path 100 is shown. On the target side of the pull bus arbiter 22, the targets 14 are coupled to the pull bus arbiter 22 by the pull bus 42 (from FIG. 2). The masters 12 are coupled to the pull bus arbiter 22 by the master side pull bus 44 (from FIG. 2). The targets 14 are end points and the masters 12 are sources

for a pull operation.

The pull bus arbiter 22 includes a multiplexor (MUX) 102, an arbitration unit 104 and pull command queues 106a, 106b, 106c, 106d, one for each supported target, coupled to the pull bus arbitration unit 104. The pull command queues 106a, 106b, 106c, 106d are coupled to corresponding targets 14a, 14b, 14c and target "master 12a" (for operations in which master 0 functions as a target), respectively, by pull data buses 108a, 108b, 108c and 108d, respectively, and pull command buses 110a, 110b, 110c and 110d, respectively. Collectively, the buses 108, 110 make up the target side pull bus 42. The arbiter 22 also provides a pull command queue full signal (Pull_CmdQ_Full) 111 to a target to indicate to the target that the corresponding pull command queue 106 is almost full, and a signal Take_Data 112 to indicate to a target that pull data has been transferred to that target.

The master side pull bus 44 includes a pull data bus 112a for master 12a and a pull data bus 113b for master 12b. The pull data bus 113 is used by the masters to send pull data to the arbiter 22, or more specifically, to the multiplexor 102. The pull bus 44 also includes a pull ID bus 114 and pull done signal (Pull_Sig_Done) 116 that allow the arbiter 22 to provide information to the masters during

a pull (or write) operation.

Each of the targets uses a data buffer (not shown) to store pull (or write) data. The target receives the command 50 over the command bus 37 (shown in FIGS. 2 and 4) and determines from the command's operation type field 52b (FIG. 3) that the operation is a pull operation. When the target has room in the data buffer for the amount of data specified in the command, it arbitrates for the use of the pull data bus 34. The information specifying the location of the data (that is, which master and which storage location being used by the master for the data) was presented in the pull ID field 53 of the command 50. Because that information is in a command field, the unit identified as the source of the pull data does not need to be the master that sent the command. The source can be any addressable unit that has a path to the pull data bus 108.

Each target sends the full Pull ID and length (derived from the command 50) for information it would like to pull to the target. The target must have buffer space available for the pull data when it asserts the Pull ID via the corresponding pull command bus 110.

The Pull ID is enqueued in a corresponding one of the pull command queues 106 in the pull bus arbiter 22 unless the Pull_CmdQ_Full signal 111 is asserted for that pull

command queue. The assertion of the Pull_CmdQ_Full signal 111 indicates that the pull command queue 106 for that specific target has reached a predetermined fullness threshold.

The arbitration unit 104 arbitrates among the currently valid pull IDs enqueued in the pull command queues 106 to select a target, or more specifically, a pull ID enqueued by that target. The arbitration policy can be one of a number of well known schemes, for example, round robin, or a priority based scheme. The arbitration unit 104 sends the selected pull ID to the corresponding source over the pull ID bus 114. The pull bus arbiter 22 asserts the Take_Data signal 112 to the selected target. The source provides the pull data to the MUX 102, which is enabled to send the pull data onto the pull data bus 108 by the arbitration unit 104 via control signal 119. The arbitration unit 104 asserts the pull done signal 116 to the source.

Thus, write data transport is under the control of the target. The target of a write operation pulls the write or pull data over the pull bus 34 when it needs it, rather than having it sent at the same time as the write operation type. Therefore the target can allocate internal buffers for the pull data based on when the target needs the data and has available buffer space. Also, as mentioned earlier, the

target can get write data from a source other than the command initiator, as directed by information in the command.

The architecture of system 10 provides for flexible bandwidth allocation via multiple instantiations of the various buses and arbiters. Because there are separate buses for commands, push data, and pull data, the buses can be added incrementally as needed.

Referring back to FIG. 4, if the control bandwidth for an application is insufficient, one or more additional copies of the command bus 37 and arbiter 19 could be added to the system. Each arbiter 19 could support a subset of the masters (for example, in a four-master implementation in which two arbiters are used, each arbiter could support a different pair of the masters), but the targets would receive commands from all of the masters.

For increased data bus bandwidth, copies of the push bus and pull bus, along with the appropriate arbitration logic, could be added. For example, referring back to FIG. 5, additional master-side buses 40 and arbiters 20 could be added to the system. Each target's push data bus 88 and command bus 90 would be coupled to each of the arbiters so there would be no need for a target to drive more than one set of push data/command buses. Each arbiter would have to

be aware of the masters (destinations) to which it is wired, and enqueue the data and IDs accordingly. Each arbiter 20 and associated bus 40 could be connected to a subset of the sources.

Referring to FIG. 6, copies of the target side pull bus 42 and associated arbitration logic could be added to the system. Each arbiter 22 and bus 42 would be connected to each of the targets. Each arbiter 22 and associated bus 44 could support a subset of the sources. The pull bus arrangement would be similar to the push bus arrangement in that each target only needs to drive one copy of the pull ID to all of the arbiters. However, unique copies of the pull data are needed, as it is possible that the pull buses would have valid data on them on the same cycle. In the case of both push and pull buses, all of the arbiters would be connected to all targets, allowing data to be moved between any master and any target.

Other embodiments are within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

transferring a command and a target identification between one or more bus masters and bus targets over a bus structure, the command including information that is interpreted differently by one of the bus targets based on the target identification.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the target identification is a field in the command.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the bus structure includes a separate command bus, push bus and pull bus.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein transferring includes sending the command to all of the bus targets over the command bus so that each bus target can determine if the command is intended for such target.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the bus target identified in the command controls the transfer of information over the push bus to one of the bus masters for

a push operation.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the one of the bus masters is identified in the command by an identifier in a destination field in the command.

7. The method of claim 3 wherein the bus target identified in the command is operable to control transfer of information over the pull bus from one of the master buses to the bus target for a pull operation.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the one of the bus masters is identified in the command by an identifier in a source field in the command.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the command is formatted to specify one of a plurality of operation types, and the command includes at least one field that is interpreted according to the which of the plurality of operation types is specified in the command.

10. The method of claim 2 wherein at least one of the units acts as one of the bus masters at times and acts as one of the bus targets at other times.

11. The method of claim 3 wherein the bus structure further includes arbiters, the arbiters including a command arbiter associated with the command bus, a push arbiter associated with the push bus and a pull arbiter associated with the pull bus

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the bus masters arbitrate for use of the command using the command arbiter, and the bus targets arbitrate for use of the push and pull buses using the respective push and pull arbiters.

13. An article comprising:

a storage medium having stored thereon instructions that when executed by a machine result in the following:

transferring a command over a bus to bus targets, the command being formatted to identify one of the bus targets and include information that is interpreted differently based on which one of the bus targets is identified.

14. The article of claim 13 wherein the bus structure includes a separate command bus, push bus and pull bus.

15. An apparatus comprising:

a plurality of units;

a bus structure to enable communication exchanges between the units connected to the bus structure, with one or more of the units being bus masters and others of the units being bus targets, the bus masters operable to send a command to bus targets over the bus structure, the command formatted to identify one of the bus targets and having information that is interpreted differently based on which one of the bus targets is identified.

16. The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the bus structure includes a separate command bus, push bus and pull bus.

17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the command is sent to all of the bus targets over the command bus to all of the bus targets and each bus target determines if the command is intended for such target.

18. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the bus target identified in the command is operable to control transfer of information over the push bus to one of the bus masters for a push operation.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the one of the bus masters is identified in the command by an identifier in a destination field in the command.

20. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the bus target identified in the command is operable to control transfer of information over the pull bus from one of the bus masters to the bus target for a pull operation.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the one of the bus masters is identified in the command by an identifier in a source field in the command.

22. The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the command is formatted to specify one of a plurality of operation types, and the command includes at least one field that is interpreted according to the which of the plurality of operation types is specified in the command.

23. A apparatus comprising:

a bus master operable to send a command to bus targets over a bus structure, the command being formatted to identify one of the bus targets and including information

that is interpreted differently based on which one of the bus targets is identified.

24. The apparatus of claim 23 wherein the command is formatted to specify one of a plurality of operation types, and the command includes at least one field that is interpreted according to the which of the plurality of operation types is specified in the command.

25. An apparatus comprising:

a bus target operable to receive a command from a bus master over a bus structure, the command being formatted to identify the bus target that receives the command; and

logic in the bus target to interpret information that is received by the bus target identified.

26. The apparatus of claim 25 wherein logic processes the command that is formatted to specify one of a plurality of operation types, and the command includes at least one field interpreted according to the which of the plurality of operation types is specified in the command.

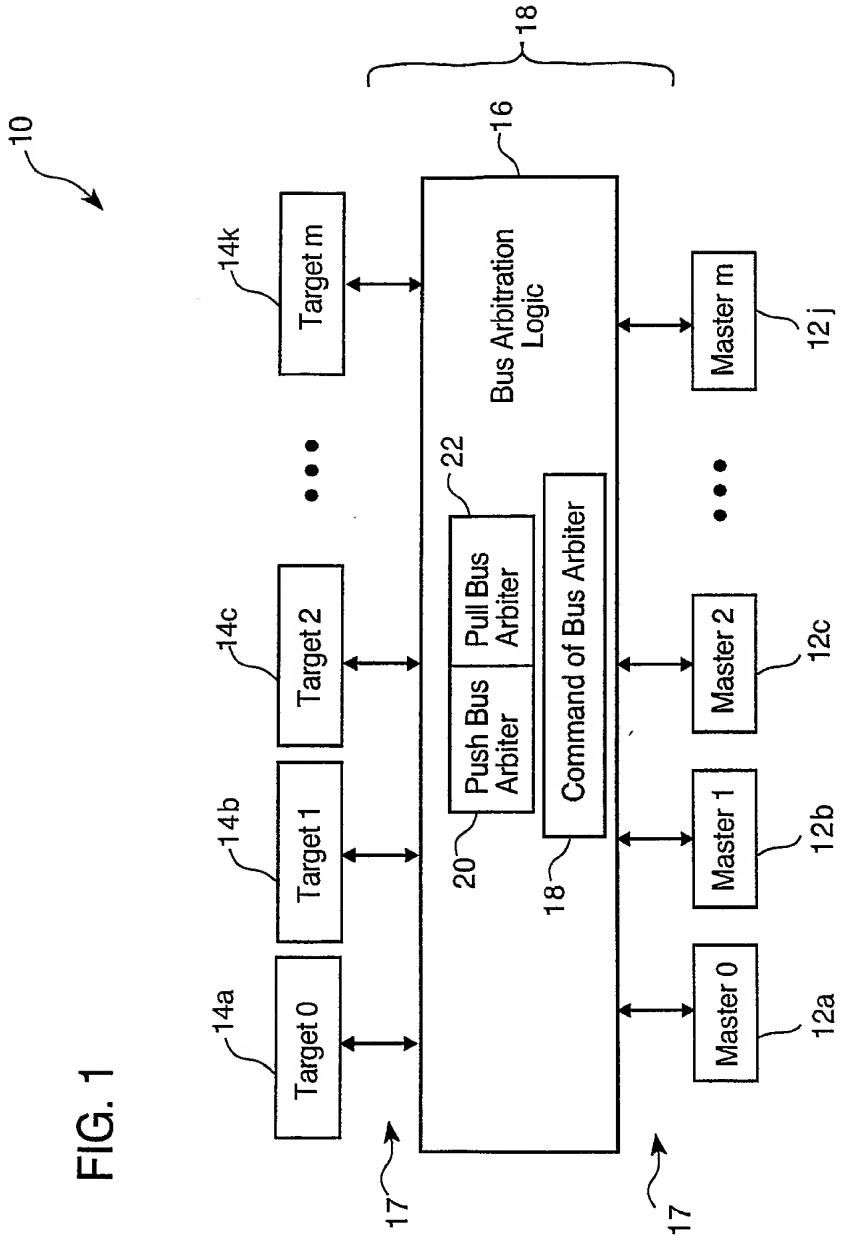

10
18
16
14k
Target m
Bus Arbitration Logic
Master m
12 j
22
Pull Bus Arbiter
Push Bus Arbiter
20
Command of Bus Arbiter
18
14c
Target 2
Master 2
12c
14b
Target 1
Master 1
12b
14a
Target 0
Master 0
12a
17
17

FIG. 1

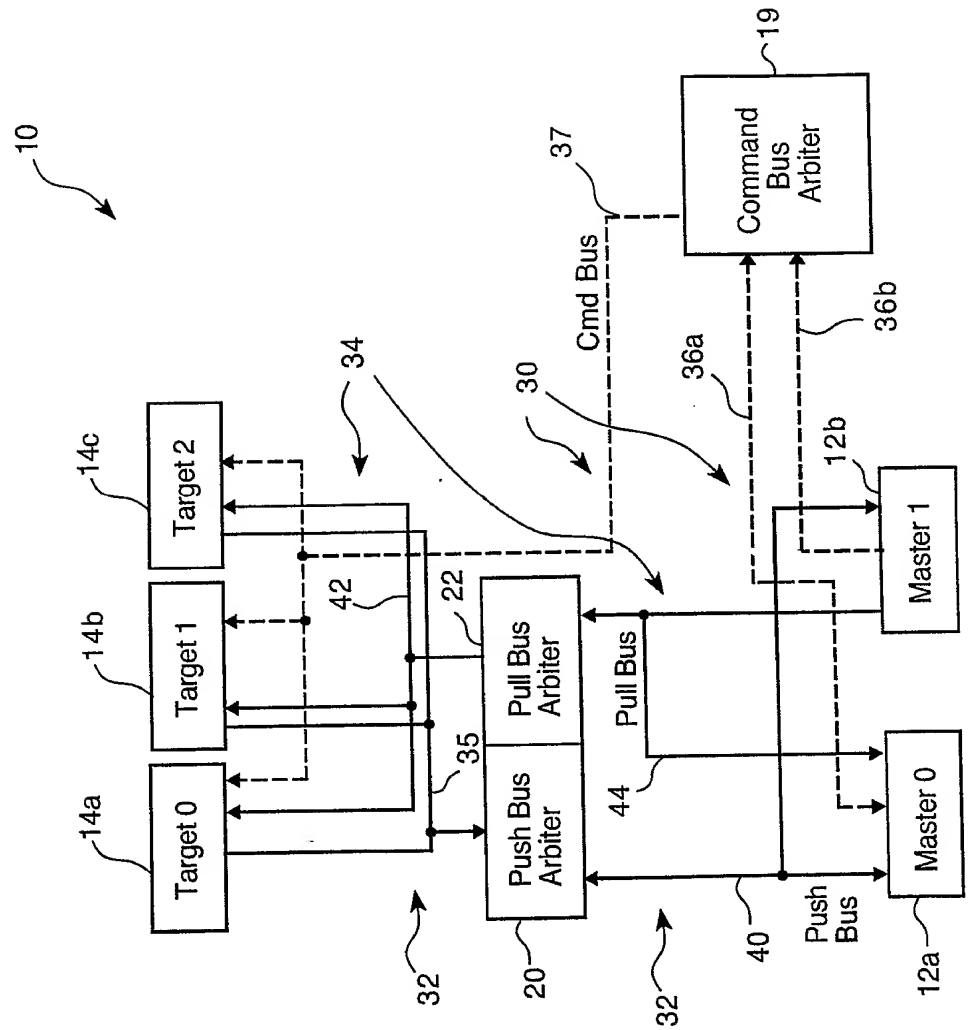
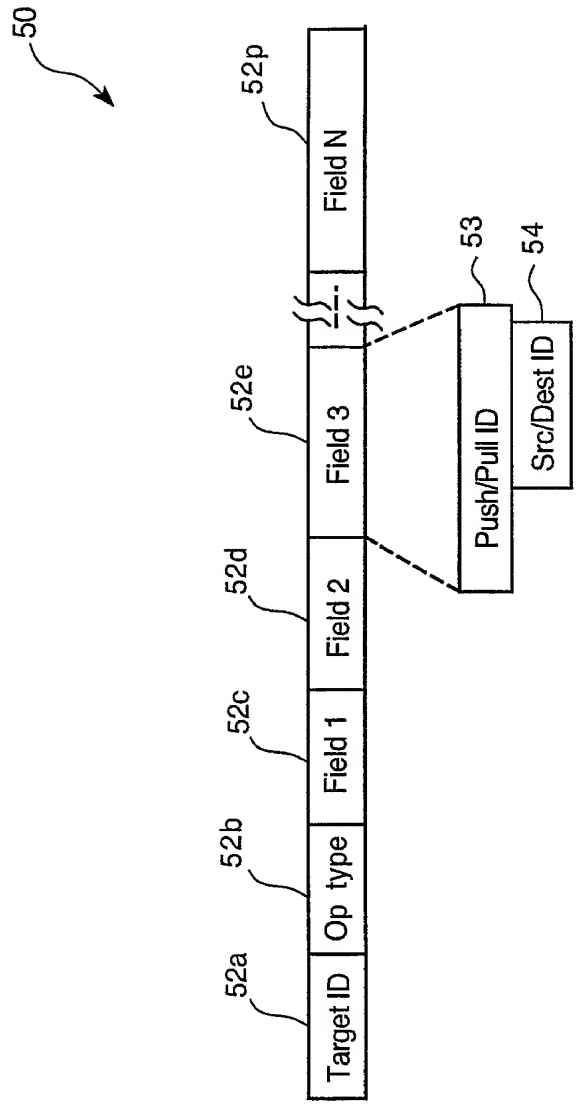

10
19
Command Bus Arbiter
37
Cmd Bus
36b
36a
34
30
14c
Target 2
12b
Master 1
42
22
14b
Target 1
Pull Bus Arbiter
Pull Bus
35
14a
Target 0
Push Bus Arbiter
44
Master 0
32
20
32
40
Push Bus
12a

FIG. 2

FIG. 3


50
52p
Field N
53
54
52e
Field 3
Push/Pull ID
Src/Dest ID
52d
Field 2
52c
Field 1
52b
Op type
52a
Target ID

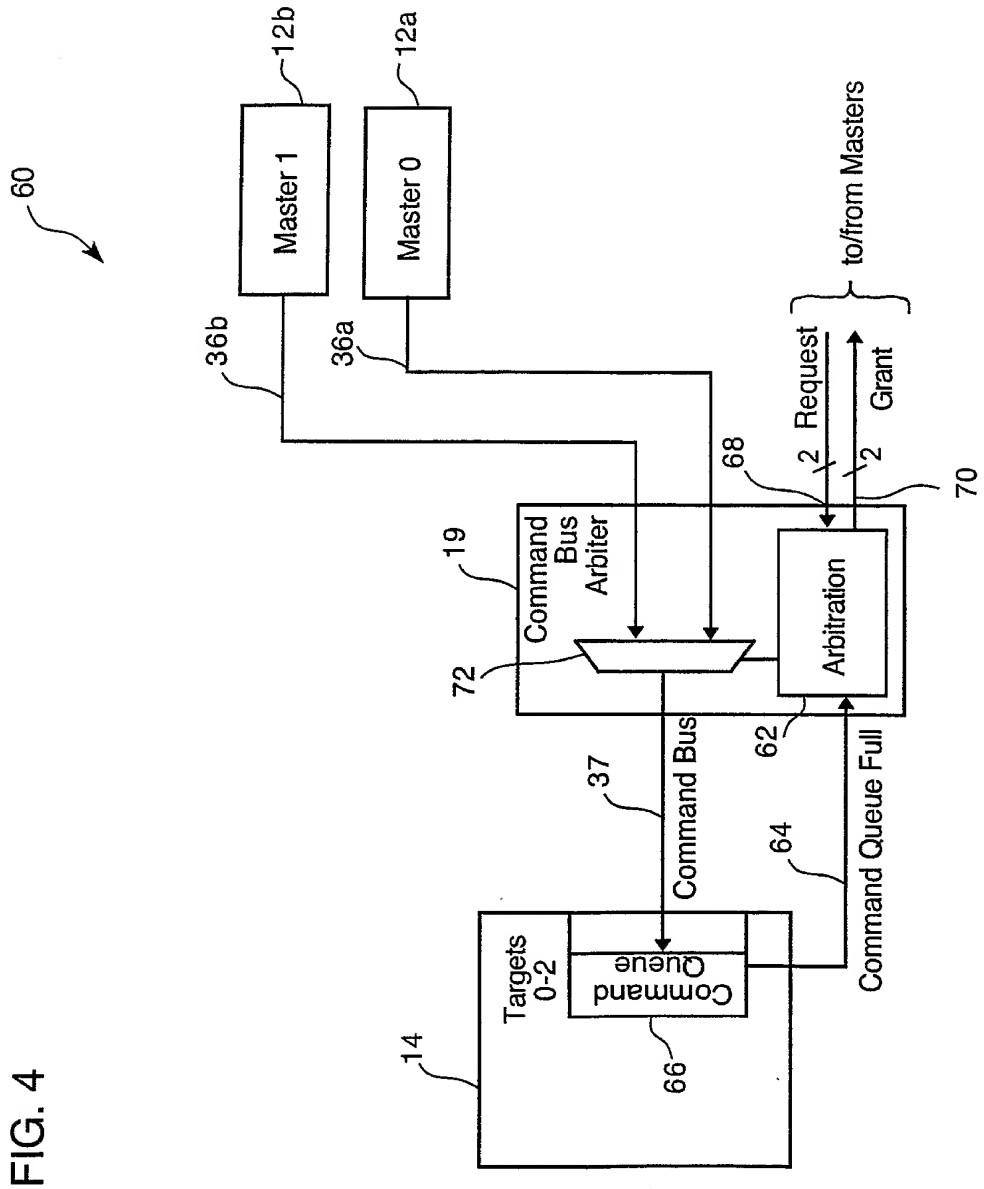

60
Master 1
12b
Master 0
12a
36b
36a
to/from Masters
Request
Grant
2
2
68
70
19
Command Bus Arbiter
72
Arbitration
62
37
Command Bus
64
Command Queue Full
Targets 0-2
Command Queue
66
14

FIG. 4

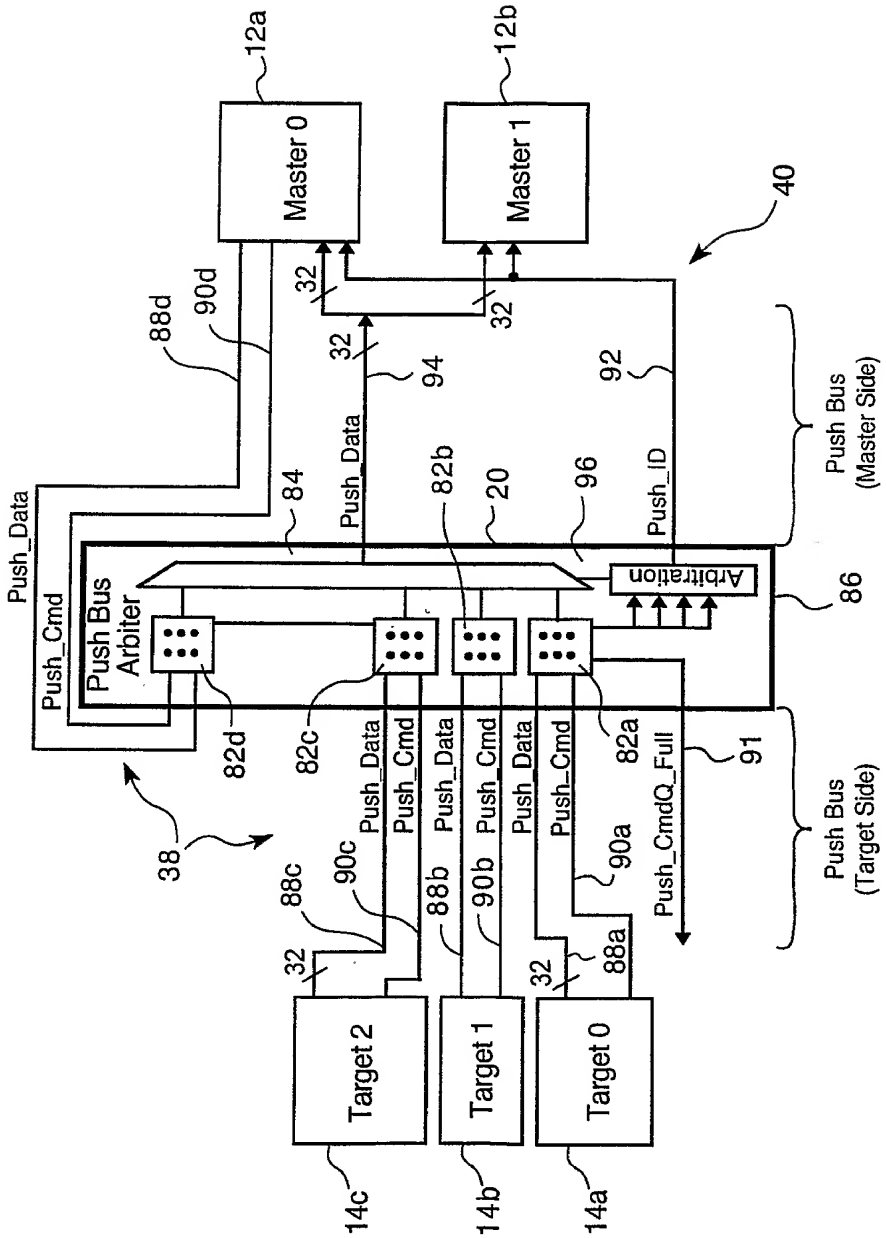

80
12a
Master 0
12b
Master 1
40
88d
90d
32
32
32
94
92
Push_Data
84
Push_Data
82b
20
96
Push_ID
Push Bus
(Master Side)
Push_Data
Push_Cmd
Push Bus
Arbiter
Arbitration
86
82d
82c
82a
91
38
Push_Data
Push_Cmd
Push_Data
Push_Cmd
Push_Data
Push_Cmd
Push_CmdQ_Full
Push Bus
(Target Side)
88c
90c
88b
90b
90a
88a
32
32
32
Target 2
Target 1
Target 0
14c
14b
14a

FIG. 5

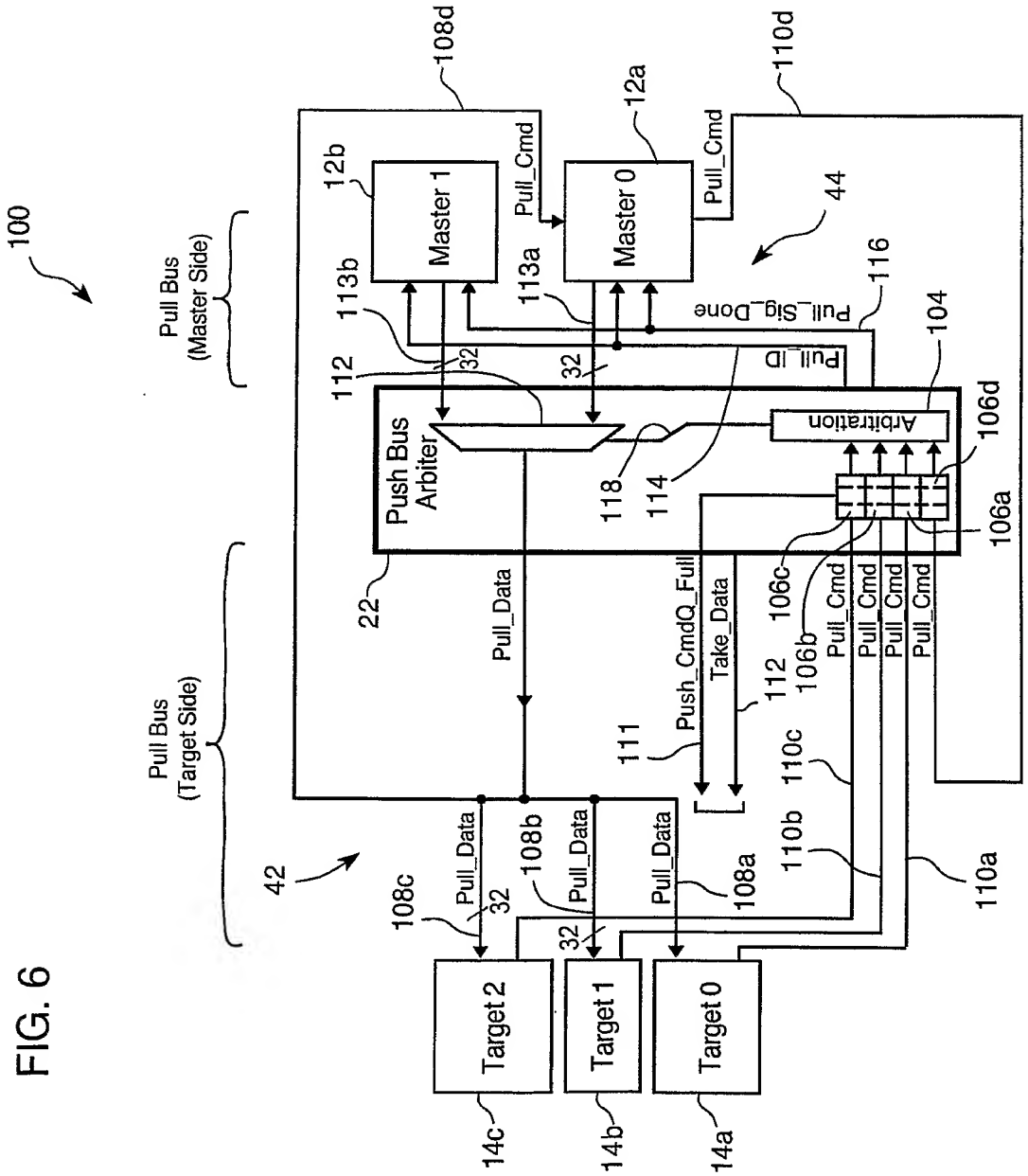

100
Pull Bus (Master Side)
Pull Bus (Target Side)
Master 1
Master 0
Push Bus Arbiter
Arbitration
Pull_Cmd
Pull_Sig_Done
Pull_ID
Pull_Data
Push_CmdQ_Full
Take_Data
Target 2
Target 1
Target 0
12b
12a
44
42
22
104
106a
106b
106c
106d
108a
108b
108c
108d
110a
110b
110c
110d
111
112
113a
113b
114
116
118
14a
14b
14c
32

FIG. 6

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/US 02/27430

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 G06F13/40 G06F13/42

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 G06F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)
EPO-Internal, COMPENDEX, INSPEC, PAJ, IBM-TDB, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	ROMILLY BOWDEN: "What is HART?" ROMILLY'S HART AND FIELDBUS WEB SITE, 'Online! 1997, XP002219605 Retrieved from the Internet: <URL:http://www.romilly.co.uk/whathart.htm > 'retrieved on 2002-11-05! page 2 -page 3 ---	1,2,4,9, 10,13, 15,22-26
X	ANONYMOUS: "HART, Field Communications Protocol, Application Guide" 'Online! 1999 , HART COMMUNICATION FOUNDATION , 9390 RESEARCH BOULEVARD, SUITE I-350, ASUTIN, TEXAS 78759 USA XP002219606 Retrieved from the Internet: <URL: http://lhc-div.web.cern.ch/lhc-div/IAS/WS/ WorldFip/Labo/appguide.pdf> 'retrieved on 2002-11-05! page 6 -page 7 ---	1,2,4,9, 10,13, 15,22-26

-/--

[X] Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

[X] Patent family members are listed in annex.

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"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

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"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
6 November 2002	21/11/2002

Name and mailing address of the ISA	Authorized officer
European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL – 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31–70) 340–2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31–70) 340–3016	Albert, J

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1992)

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication,where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 4 045 782 A (SCHUMANN REINHARD ET AL) 30 August 1977 (1977-08-30) column 3, line 55 - line 62; figure 1	3,16
A	US 5 812 799 A (ZURAVLEFF WILLIAM K ET AL) 22 September 1998 (1998-09-22) abstract; figures 4,8	1-26

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No
PCT/US 02/27430

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 4045782 A	30-08-1977	NONE	
US 5812799 A	22-09-1998	NONE	